

IMAGERY OF WITHDRAWAL, VIOLENCE AND DESTRUCTION IN THE KĀLĪKRAMA

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Imaging the construction of the power-reality in the Kashmiri Śaiva Tradition

In the Kashmiri Śaiva Tradition, imagination is generally held to be the power of the cognitive mind that gives rise to the self-referential awareness configured exactly as the process of reflecting on the transcendent-cum-immanent nature of consciousness. To assume, in conformity with the Kashmiri Śaivaites, that imagination is congruent with 'becoming aware', is to portend the profoundly transformative shift from the mere possibility to concrete actualization of the supreme knowledge (*śuddhavidyā*). Qualitative features of imagination rest upon the theory of absolute non-dualism (*paramādvaita*) conceiving the entire universe as a manifestation of the supreme consciousness. In effect, transparent and all-pervading consciousness is vindicated by the unity and continuity of its self-contained embrace that ties the knot of intrinsic relatedness between immanence and transcendence. This assumption dramatically alters character of imagination transforming it into a valid tool of self-awareness aspiring for the ultimate realization. Furthermore, the theory of absolute non-dualism (*paramādvaita*), entrenched in the curious unity of its non-dual substance underlying the whole phenomena, annihilates the imposition of distinction between mind and matter in conformity with supposition that confers equal status of existential authenticity to both. Though admitting an irremediable ontological equanimity to an imaginary flower and to a common flower (that can be

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touched and smelled), it attempts at showing that all apparently opposed phenomena truly belong to the manifestation of the supreme consciousness¹ that pervades (*vyāpti*) the entire universe. Apart from the vast range of philosophical issues thematized within this conceptual framework, the role of imagination forming the mental objects is particularly highlighted in the domain of religious ritual where it is employed in the techniques of contemplation (*sattarka*, *bhāvanā*, *avadhāna*). As such, imagination is a powerful tool particularly attentive to the construction of the sacred reality embodied in the powers one wants to obtain and control. Visualization of the deities and divine beings whose appearances are typified by in-built regulations of the particular tradition to which they belong, entails empowerment of the practitioner that can be used for acquirement of the magical powers (*siddhi*) or for the sake of purely spiritual merits (*mokṣa*). In the Kālīkrama, regarded as one of the most esoteric schools of the Kashmiri Śaiva Tradition permeating religious landscape of the early medieval Kashmir, imaginative contemplation involves concentration on the Goddess Kālī the main deity of this tradition. Kālīkrama system is one of the earliest traditions of Kashmir Śaivism elaborated in the first half of the ninth century in Uççiyāna (Kashmir). Said to have been instructed supernaturally by the Goddess Kālī herself to Śivānanda alias Jñānānētra who was considered to be the first preceptor of the system. The term '*krama*', literally 'sequence' refers to the mystical cult of the Goddess Kālī and her emanations. In the canonical declamation, Kālī is the image of the omnipotent death and destruction. Therefore, imagery of destruction employed in the contemplative absorptions is directed to construction of the power-reality giving possibility for the mystical realization of the Goddess Kālī. The theme of annihilation specifically belongs to the 'mood' (*bhāva*) of Kālī, insofar as she embodies the cosmic power of withdrawal (*saṁhāra*krama). Established within this destructive mode of expression, Kālī and her attendants inhabiting the sacred domain of the ritual are visualized by the practitioner in their respective facades of terrifying and violent features. Kālī brings forth the world of phenomenal existence to manifestation by means of her creative imagination (*kalpāna*) which is congruent with generation of time (*kalate*). Her creative imagination (*kalpāna*) embodies dynamics of consciousness entrenched in the mode of withdrawal (*saṁhāra*krama) that unfolds/retracts within the three-fold structure of emission, maintenance and dissolution. In this way, each act of perception is issued forth with intention of its subsequent dissolution.² The same goes on

with time which is brought forth in order to be devoured by the Goddess Kālī the embodiment of the principle of time. Ritualistic aspect of the Kālīkrama puts emphasis on the notion of liberation, that can be achieved through assimilation with the Goddess Kālī herself, by replicating her creative imagination (*kalpāna*) embodied in the sequence of the cognitive process of an adept following the same three-fold sequence: 1) emission of the sense-perception in the field of consciousness (*srshti*), 2) maintenance of the sense-perception for a certain duration of time (*sthiti*), and afterwards, 3) dissolution (*saṁhāra*) to the undifferentiated potentiality (*anākhyā*). The creative imagination (*kalpāna*) undertaken by the Goddess Kālī is generated by the intensification of the state of withdrawal of this three-fold configuration: emission, maintenance and dissolution. The theme of destruction presupposed in imaginative consciousness of the Krama yogi reflects this simple determination of the withdrawal-based creative imagination of the Goddess Kālī. Imaging is implicated by the stages of absorptions or withdrawals complemented by mystic immersion evolved from the sensory experience.

Defining imagination sattarka, bhāvanā, avadhāna

Imagination as a contemplative practice directed towards mystical realization of the Goddess Kālī assumes a central place in the Kālīkrama. In a structural sense, imagination is intended for a certain conditioning of the ordinary consciousness that involves intuitive reasoning, visualization and attentive awareness. Perhaps more striking, in all these components of imagination, the intellect (*buddhi*) plays a vital role. The intellect (*dhi*) which is compared to the effulgent brilliance (*tejas*) is an instrument by means of which dissolution and final repose of the activities of mind (*citta viśhrāma*) takes place.³ The intellect is conceived as an instrument of knowledge endowed with mental stability (*dhairya, sthairyā*) that has ascended above the empirical, differentiated level of consideration, and thus comprises a mystical cognition that 'all is one'. Mental stability, so comprehended, reaches significantly farther, or we might rather say, to the final destination, for, it terminates with the ultimate realization of Kālī's nature. The *Kramasadbhāva*, one of the root texts of the Kālīkrama avers: '*Lay hold of this strength, the essence of mental firmness (dhairyasadbhāva), which is named Kālīka, stainless (niraṅjana)*'⁴.

This setting appears less paradoxical, if we bear in mind that tradition of the Kālīkrama is considered to be the representative of the

spiritual means (*upāya*), known as the method of power (*śāktopāya*). The salient feature of this *upāya* is its cognitive character based only on the cognitive energy (*jāñnashakti*) that utilizes the mental process (*citti*) employed in functioning of the inner mental organs (*antaikāraṇa*) intellect (*buddhi*), egoity (*ahamkāra*) and mind (*manas*). However, in the perspective of the Kashmiri Śaiva Tradition, to which Kālīkrama belongs, the cognitive process is founded not only on this strong mental basis, but also on its religious utilization in service of liberation. As a matter of fact, mind is not so much an agent of cold logical deliberation, but rather the primordial cause for the 'sacred intellectualization' granting profound mystical insight into the true nature of things.

a) *Sattarka and bhāvanā*

Intuitive reasoning (*sattarka*) and mental imagination (*bhāvanā*) are considered to be mystical practices following the mode of intellectual reflection or 'sacred intellectualization' determining a set of rapturous absorptions. They indicate foremost 'an imagination conceived as an efficient and creative power which tends to identify itself with the imagined object'⁵ but have also a strong concomitance with the concepts of 'spiritual efficiency, infused contemplation, intense creative imagination, evocation of imagination, conviction and obscure impulse'.⁶ The 10-11th century Kashmiri Abhinavagupta, the most revered theologian of the Kashmiri Śaiva Tradition considers *sattarka* as the highest limb of yoga taking into account its great soteriological efficiency.⁷

Intuitive reasoning (*sattarka*) and mental imagination (*bhāvanā*) are generated by the intensification of the process of withdrawal which takes place three-fold as emission, persistence and destruction. This method implies a kind of repeated reflection, employed in visualization of the various forms of Kālī engaged in destruction, marking the entryway to the purification of thought-constructs (*vikalpa-saṃskāra*). However, here visualization should not be understood as the contemplation on the concrete object of thought towards which the practitioner turns his attention, but rather as a sudden immersion in retroactive dynamism of one's own consciousness that consigns the sequence (*krama*) of emission, persistence and dissolution of the sense-perceptions into the purifying fire of the non-sequential (*akrama*) withdrawal. This purification of thought-constructs (*vikalpa-saṃskāra*) includes both process (*krama*) and its absence (*akrama*) and gives rise to the awakening of Pure Knowledge (*śuddhavidyā*) by means of which the

non-dual nature of reality becomes clearly apparent. In this way, expansion of consciousness that occurs along with intense projection of the different forms of Kālī is paradoxically sustained by the process of withdrawal (*vilāpanakrama*) which is a reverse condition of the process of creation (*udayakrama*). This intensification of destructive tendency is the mode which renders things their true being. The aim of the practices of imaginative deliberation is to acquire a firm conviction (*niścaya*). In virtue of a firm conviction, an affirmation of one's own nature non-different from the ultimate principle is ascertained. 'I am all this' is the purest thought-construct, therefore, an adept who recognizes his own true nature in the entire phenomena becomes a universal agent of mental representations and attains a state of the Goddess Kālī.

b) *Avadhāna*

The attentive awareness (*avadhāna*) is yet another term used in the Kālīkrama scriptures for description of imaginative contemplation. The *Mahānayaprākāśa* of Trivandrum describes *avadhāna* in the following words:

'By constant attention (*avadhāna*) to one's own reflective awareness (*vimarśa*) (from Kālāgni to śiva), the existence of all universe is suddenly (*sāhasa*) dissolved away (*viciyat*) into one's own nature. Thus, by constant attention to the abiding state (*sthiti*) which is one's own essential nature, by laying hold (*grāha*) of all attachment (*Āgraha*), liberation in this life manifests. That attention is practiced by attending to the innate nature of the subject who experiences the objects of sense (*viśaya*) by the firmness (*sthairya*) which is the undetermined thought-construct (*avikalpavikalpa*). The best of yogis should abide firmly fixed (in the practice) of supreme attention which roots out all obscuring coverings by making firm his own nature (*svarēpadārdhya*).⁸

The practice of constant attention (*avadhāna*) engages mindfulness—the reflective awareness (*vimarśa*) as a means supporting a sudden (*sāhasa*) dissolution of the thirty-six cosmic principles (from Kālāgni to śiva) into one's own true nature.⁹ Moreover, this attentiveness is supported by firmness (*sthairya*) that successfully seizes generation of desires generally presupposed in an impending determination of mental constructs. Evident application of this constant attention entrenched in firmness brings cessation to the differentiated mental formations. An adept who attends to the sphere of phenomenal existences unsullied by

the sense of attachment, becomes liberated in life. In the same manner as practices described in the previous paragraphs, *avadhāna* is also the means of purification taking place through dissolution of the impure thought-constructs. Visualizations of the terrifying forms of Kālī import this kind of reflective awareness that helps to eradicate vestiges of thought-constructs. Considering *avadhāna* as a unique practice, one issue should be stressed, namely firmness (*sthairya*). As a method for remaining alert, firmness is a necessary condition responsible for deepening of the reflective awareness. Firmness strengthens mind due to which its usual tendency to fickleness is overcome. It supports sustained concentration directed towards dissociation of accidental stirrings of the mental processes. Finally, it grants the access to undetermined consciousness and bestows liberation from one's own individuality.

Death as a theme of praxis - imagery of withdrawal, violence and destruction

In the spiritual context, imagination is a field of nullification of differentiated thought-constructs that belong to the ordinary level of awareness. In fact, the visions of furious Kālīs are invoked to activate this process insofar as an adept inserts himself in this imagery of destruction and confers on it a status of spiritual legacy. A practitioner who plunges into this meditative visions identifies himself with objects of his contemplation with the powers representing cosmic dissolution. Therefore, imagery of withdrawal, violence and destruction acts as the symbols of transcendence that wrest from the 'body' of Kālī. This network of images is the mode of possession (*Āvesha*) mounted on merging into the body of Kālī that leads an adept to a state of divine union (*samāvesha*) and to the total realization of his identity with the ultimate principle of the Goddess Kālī.

a) The Cremation Ground

The Kālīkrama has developed on the basis of very sophisticated, esoteric teachings related to the powerful deities of frightful facades the residents of the cremation ground appointed to their destructive activity. The image of the cremation ground assumes an unquestionable importance in the Kālīkrama on account of lineage ancestry, locating residence of several gurus in the most sacred cremation ground in Uḇḇiyāna, called Kāravīra. These gurus were the Skull-Bearers (*Kāpālikas*) famous for their most abhorrent practices. Exegetically, the Krama's revealed scriptures claim to have position of the supreme

authority in elaboration of the secret esoteric teachings, *because* they were written in the actual place of the Kāravīra cremation ground. The Kāravīra cremation ground, regarded as the material location of the Goddess Kālī, is ruled by a symbolic system of codes, set into powerfully potent mythological and ritualistic realm. The great cemetery (*māhaśmaśāna*) is equated with the condition of supreme undifferentiation (*akula*) in which the world of phenomenal existence reaches its final repose.¹⁰

The transference to the mythological realm of the cremation ground aims at establishing the spatial location abiding within the frames of imagination that would have a desirable dissolving impact upon ordinary consciousness. It is a prelude to the experience of disintegration of the exclusive ego¹¹, when, after successfully completed phase of dissolution (symbolized by the cremation ground), one can begin to forge the new enlightened consciousness. By the act of meditative interiorization, the one who becomes absorbed into contemplation on the fire of his own consciousness, enters the cremation ground of his own body, terrible with the funeral pyres wherein all latent traces of the past actions (*karman*) are burnt to ashes. In a particular way, the cremation ground relates to the heart the seat of consciousness, for it is the spot where differentiated nature of mental constructs is permanently devoured by the fire of great destruction.¹²

b) *The Fire of Time (kālāgni)*

Kālī is commonly identified with the image of fire devouring time (*kāla*). This image is important if we bear in mind that fire exists exclusively by means of its fuel and after the fuel is finished, it is destined for the final disappearance. The Fire of Time (*kālāgni*) is twelve-fold insofar as it stands for diversification of the universal time divided into twelve months of the year. In this sense, the Fire of Time constitutes the basis of human existence because it binds people to death by aging process. However, an adept can be released from the bonds of time when he employs the practice of contemplation on the devouring Fire of Time that leads to cosmicization of the individual body. The macrocosmic dissolution is projected into the microcosm of human corporeality. In this way, the principle of time itself, along with its destructive 'becoming', functions as an instrument of liberation. The practice of dissolution embodied in the Fire of Time (*kālāgni*) burning 'fortress of the body' is given in the *Vijñānabhairava*:

‘One should meditate on one’s own fortress (the body) as if it were consumed by the Fire of Time, rising from the foot. At the end of this meditation the peaceful state will appear.’¹³

According to the *Tantrāloka*, on the macrocosmic level, the Fire of Time (*kālāgni*) is the agency of dissolution awakening at the end of each cosmic eon that rises up to the underworld and spreads out its flames throughout the universe. After dissolution is completed, the beginning of a new cosmic cycle takes place. The cosmic dissolution follows the mode of return that engulfs the universe from the lowest plane of the *nivṛtti kalā* to the highest plane of the *shāntatītkalā*.¹⁴ The lowest phase of manifestation called ‘cessation’ (*nivṛtti*) corresponds to the Fire of Time (*kālāgni*), the highest phase called ‘beyond tranquility’ (*shāntatīta*) that gives rise to the experience of peacefulness, is the state of Śiva. On the microcosmic level of yogic body, the Fire of Time is a tool of pervasion (*vyāpti*) when a spiritual adept, as a part of ritual procedure, places (*nyāsa*) the letters of the alphabet on the limbs of his body, beginning with the left toe (*kālāgni*) and ending with the top of the head (*Shāntatīta*). The Fire of Time (*kālāgni*) instigating devouring conflagration stands, therefore, for microcosmic equivalent of cosmic dissolution that ultimately leads spiritual adept to the experience of peaceful state. This process is connoted with esoteric teachings of the *Kālīkrama*.¹⁵ Kshemarāja in the commentary on the verse six of the *Sivasutras* leaves us in no doubt about this connection when he says thus: ‘when union by awareness of this wheel of energies (*shakticakra*)¹⁶ which has been made manifest is established according to the appropriate manner as described in the secret scriptures then occurs the disappearance of the universe from *Kālāgni* up to the ultimate *Sāntatīta kalā*, that is to say, though external existence may continue in the form of the body and other external objects, it is reduced to sameness with the fire of the highest consciousness’.¹⁷

Invoked in this powerful meditation, the Fire of Time (*Kālāgni*) that burns the ‘fortress of the body’ purports to articulate retroactive model of consciousness, that in an act of reversal (*pratyavṛttikrama*), sustains the process of cosmic dissolution letting oneself to be disengaged from the bonds of temporality.¹⁸ In faithful attunement with this imaginary process, the annihilation of the sense of distinctiveness is accomplished. More is meant still by this what dissipates the endless pursuit of the sensory awareness. This meditative practice, at its apogee, offers fiery assimilation with the highest consciousness the Goddess Kālī.

c) *Violent Baking (hashthapāka) and Total Devouring (Alaṁgrāsa)*

As we have mentioned before, the unique treasure of the Kālikrama tradition lies in the specific concept of the supreme consciousness conceived as the series of withdrawals conditioned by the degrees of intensity. The greater is the intensity of destruction, the better is the chance of reaching the desirable threshold free of impending determination of thought-constructs. In the Kālikrama, dissolution (*saṁhāra*) is not a final phase, though, even when thought-constructs have retracted (*saṁhāra*) from the field of consciousness, their impressions still exist in a latent state and silent they are about to surface again. Therefore, dissolution (*saṁhāra*) requires another destruction. This intensification of the destructive tendency emphasized by the sequence of the destruction of destruction (*saṁhārasaṁhārakrama*) is brought about by the processes of violent baking (*hashthapāka*) and total devouring (*alaṁgrāsa*). The vehement power of absorption congruent with the process of forceful baking (*hashthapāka*) is the witness of fast maturation of the latent traces of thought-constructs (*saṁskāra*) when 'raw' potentiality becomes 'cooked' by the process of violent heating. *Alaṁgrāsa* is not so much a separate process, but rather a personality of the *hashthapāka* which draws the latent traces of thought-constructs to the final extermination. The adjectives 'violent' (*hashtha*) and 'total' confront us with imagery of uncontrolled dynamics of the digestive track instigated by the vehement power of complete absorption. Indeed, the theme of destruction is closely associated with act of eating. The beginnings of this conceptual association can be traced back to the *Upanisads*. In the kālikrama, the act of eating, digesting and assimilating implies a unique 'digestive awareness' that entails perpetual assimilation of the latent residual traces (*saṁskāra*) entrenched in the clutches of transmigration (*saṁsāra*) intended for their complete annihilation. In the microcosm of the yogic body, 'baking' takes place in the stomach where the gastric fire (*jashthāgni*) that digests food is located. It is known as Bhairava's fire by means of which 'yogis can realize the unity of consciousness by virtue of which duality is assimilated into consciousness rapidly and with great force (*hashtha*)'.¹⁹ Apart from individual level symbolized by yogic stomach, this process has also a macrocosmic dimension represented by the Great Wheel of Bhairava. This incisively radical nature is meant to exterminate the latent traces of the entire universal objectivity. In the pictorial representation, the Great Wheel of Bhairava takes a form of the whirlpool of fire, its rapid rotation enclosed within the circles of fire consumes the faint residual traces to

the point of their final extermination. Akin to the meditative vision, the objective universe dissolves into the whirlpool of fiery conflagration and then into consciousness prepared for it. As the merger of all being, it ultimately reveals the true form of voidness, free from all objects²⁰.

d) The Emaciated Goddess and Theme of the Unsatisfied Hunger

In the tradition of the Kālīkrama, the adjectives 'emaciated, thin' (*śuskā, kṛśā*) are used commonly in description of the Goddess Kālī. Surely, they endow Kālī with qualitative features pronouncing her close association with the entire symbolic-semiotic theme of digestion. In reference to its patent connotations, 'devouring' is the sole cosmic activity of Kālī fixed upon the process of incorporation to the point of final absorption. The act of eating yields an immense amount of power and moreover, it stresses the very dynamics of the digestive track that seizes/takes hold of food or, in other words, possesses the objective content of the world. The subject of possession (*Āveśa*) is assuredly the key-term that grants a direct entrance to the understanding of the spiritual 'phenomenology' of the Kashmiri Śaiva Tradition, just to mention Abhinavagupta, who defines the spiritual practices (*upāyas*) in terms of the modes of possession (*āveśa*).²¹ The concept of possession contingently exemplified in illustrations of demonical frenzy has an exemplary status in the Kālīkrama and it is inseparable from the display of the all-devouring ambiance attending to the Goddess Kālī.

The scriptural testimony of the Kālīkrama portrays the Goddess *suska* (Emaciated One) having thin face and body exposing only bones, and thus, devoid of flesh or blood. Her breasts are dried up and her stomach is skinny.²² Draped in a skin of death as her coat, and decorated with men's blood, she is enshrined in the temple of the Fire of Time. The lips of the goddess are enormous, spread out as a formidable sun that resembles the devouring chasm, blazing with the bundles of fire and greedy to swallow the entire universe. Due to her permanent hunger that cannot be satisfied even by devouring of Brahmā and other gods, she is called the Great Thin One (*Mahākṛśā*).²³ The permanent appetite actualized in the feast directed towards swallowing of the universe is elucidated in the perspective of her 'bodily' thinness. This apparent contradiction is again used for enunciation of the withdrawal-founded metaphysics of the Kālīkrama that validates retroactive model of consciousness. Therefore, contrary to the consumption that naturally leads to the engrossment of the material body, the goddess's swallowing makes her skeletally thin. In the Kālīkrama, realization, 'creation' goes

in a backward direction insofar as it unfolds as retraction from/to the abyssal sphere of the transcendental emptiness which constitutes the essential nature of the Goddess Kālī.

e) The Constructed Bodies Of Power (*mudrā*)

Mudrā is considered to be the corporeal 'sign' or 'stamp' denoting particular state of consciousness associated with practices that involve body postures, hand gestures and mental techniques. Abhinavagupta, in his definition of '*mudrā*' avers: it is this that bestows '*ra*' happiness or joy '*mud*'. *Mudrā* is a tool by means of which an adept attains the supreme consciousness. Captured in a mirror-reflection symbolism, *mudrā* stands for reflection (*pratibimba*) of the original source (*bimba*).²⁴ In this sense, *mudrā* is related to the transformation of the individual consciousness that becomes representation of the absolute. In the Kālīkrama, *mudrā* reveals the structure and the character of the Goddess Kālī, in a sense in which individual body of the Krama yogi becomes a stamp of the transcendent source identified with Kālī. The deity is the source of power one wishes to obtain, therefore construction of one's own body in the image of a deity he/she worships leads directly to the empowerment of his/her psycho-mental being. Taking into consideration *mudrās* prescribed in the Kālīkrama scriptures, we easily perceive reference to the construction of the body of power reflecting a specific nature of Kālī. The Skeleton Posture (*Karaṅkinī mudrā*) refers to the scarcity of the objective 'flesh'. This posture is called the skeleton because it is the state of tranquility, peacefulness and retraction from any objective dependence. The Skeleton Posture involves practice of being supportless. This leads to this what lies 'beyond', to the sky of consciousness.²⁵ The *Vijñānabhairava* gives several examples of the *Karaṅkinī mudrā*.²⁶ One of them recommends the following practice: *Sitting on a soft seat one should hold one's hands and feet without support. By maintaining this position the individual mind will reach a state of supreme fullness of consciousness.*²⁷

The Wrath Posture (*Krodhinī mudrā*) relates to the supreme vitality of mantric power. As the embodiment of anger this *mudrā* provokes vehement consumption of the twenty-four principles starting from earth (*prthvi*) and ending with nature (*prakṛti*) constituting the sphere of limited perception.²⁸ On the evolutionary ladder, the earth is the last of the gross elements (*mahābhūta*), while nature (*prakṛti*) constitutes the initial root of objectivity. *Prakṛti* is the threshold from which the expansion of objectivity takes place, it differentiates itself into three

principles of mental operation (*buddhi, manas, ahaṁkāra*). *Ahaṁkāra* evolves further into fifteen principles of sensible experience (five organs of perception *jñānendriyas*, five organs of action *karmendriyas*, and five objects of perceptions - *tanmātras*). The principles of materiality consisted of the five gross elements (*mahābhūta*) including ether, wind, fire, water and earth are evolutes of the *tanmātras*. In this way, we have twenty-four conditioned principles. The Wrath Posture conducts great force of destruction which aims at resolving an insupportable tension generated by the limited scope of perceptual awareness, confined to the twenty-four conditioned principles.

The Licking Posture (*Lelihānī mudrā*) is portrayed as 'the mouth of devouring consciousness' who destroys by mere licking.²⁹ It corresponds to the field of activity engrossed in the process of violent baking (*hashthapāka*) and total devouring (*alaṁgrāsa*); it operates as the activity of the destruction of destruction (*saṁhārasaṁhārakrama*). The protruding tongue, extremely voracious and free of restraint is intent on destroying the most subtle energies the latent traces of the seeds of karma generated from the subtle body³⁰ of *puryashtaka*³¹

Aforementioned Constructed Bodies of Power (*mudrās*) represent different degrees of absorptions. The Skeleton Posture (*Karaṅkinī mudrā*) relates to the grossest level, insofar as it entails withdrawal from the objective support. The Wrath Posture (*Krodhinī mudrā*) assists withdrawal from confinements of the cognitive process reduced to the sensory experience. The Licking Posture (*Lelihānī mudrā*) operates on the level of the subtle body where it carries out dilution of the seeds of karma (*saṁskāra*) existing in a latent form.

Liberating Imagination

In the *Kālīkrama*, the imaginary life breaks through an impending determination of the mental representations by subduing awareness to the experience of annihilation. Relying on spiritual authenticity of these images and by employing them for the purpose of purification, the *Krama* yogi realizes voidness of his own intrinsic nature to be identical with the Goddess *Kālī*, and, thereafter, achieves liberation.

Notes and References

- 1 *Mahārthamañjarī* of Maheshvarānanda with the Auto-commentary 'Parimala', stanza 32.
- 2 *Mahānayaṇaprakāśa* of Arṇasimha 219.
- 3 *Kālīkulapañcaśatikā* (*Devīpañcaśatikā*) 4.6-4.8., KP (DP) 7.46.
- 4 *Kramasadbhāva* 2.2.
- 5 Silburn L., *Paramārthasāra*, p. 46 quoted after Murphy P., *Triadic Mysticism*, p. 48.
- 6 Silburn L., *Paramārthasāra*, p. 46 quoted after Murphy P., *Triadic Mysticism*, p. 48.
- 7 *TĒ* IV.15-16.
- 8 *MP* (T) 7.25., *MP* (T) 7.29-31., *MP* (T) 7.34. trans. M. Dyczkowski (unpublished)
- 9 This kind of infused meditation will be discussed at length in later part of this study.
- 10 *Śrīkalikāstotra* of Śivānanda/Jñānānētra 19.
- 11 Rawson P., *The Art of Tantra*, p. 112.
- 12 *Mahānayaṇaprakāśa* of Arṇasimha 16-17.
- 13 *Vijñānabhairava* stanza 52, in: *Vijñāna Bhairava. The Practice of Centering Awareness*, Indica 2002, p. 56.
- 14 The cosmic manifestation follows five-fold pattern represented by five phases of manifestation (*kalās*). The lowest is: 1) *nivṛtti-kalā* governed by *Kālāgnirudra*. It consists of the principle of earth (*prthvī tattva*) and has 16 planes of existence (*bhuvana*). The second is: 2) *pratishthā kalā* governed by Amaresha. It consists of 23 principles from water (*jālā tattva*) to nature (*prakṛti tattva*) and has 56 planes of existence (*bhuvana*). The third is: 3) *vidyā kalā* governed by Bhīma. It consists of 7 principles from *purusa tattva* to *māyā tattva* and has 28 planes of existence (*bhuvana*). The fourth is: 4) *Shāntī kalā* governed by Vāmā. It consists of 3 principles: *Śuddhavīdyā*, *Īshvara*, *Sadā*, iva and has 18 planes of existence (*bhuvana*). The last is: 5) *Shāntātīta kalā* governed by Nivṛtti. It consists of one principle Śiva who is said to be of the nature of Śakti and has no plane of existence (*bhuvana*). The total number of *bhuvanas* is 118. *Mahārthamañjarī*, stanza 27.
- 15 The close connection between the Fire of Time (*kālāgni*) and the esoteric teachings of the *Kālīkrama* is asserted in the passage of the *Kālīkramapañcāśhikā*, the text attributed to Niskriyānanda which consists of fifty verses. The whole text of the *Kālīkramapañcā, ikā*, which is a part of the *Uttaragharāmnāya*, found in chapter seven of the *Ciñcīnīmatasārasamuccaya*, is dedicated to the doctrine of the Twelve Kālīs, the essence of the *Kālīkrama*, called the Sun of Kula - Bhānavī Kula. There we are told that the density of withdrawal activated by the Fire of Time (*kālāgni*) runs parallel to the arousal of the solar energy of the Twelve Kālīs due to which the power of the fettered soul (*pashu*) increases. The text says:

'Once the Fire of Time has been made dense, the supreme radiant energy dissolves away. The light of consciousness, the supreme secret, has arisen as the

Sun of Kula (the Twelve Kālīs). It has Twelve Rays and, endowed with good power, it shines like many suns. It is the life of the living being and it illumines the living being which is of that same nature. In this same way, the power of the fettered soul increases.

Ciñcinimatasērasamuccaya 7.208-209. trans. M. Dyczkowski.

- 16 Khemarāja in his commentary on the first verse of the *Spandakārika* explains that the collective wheel of the shaktis (*Śakticakra*) denotes the aggregate of the Twelve Kālīs engaged in cosmic play of mystical exertion (*udyoga=srṣṭi*), manifestation (*avābhāsa=sṭhiti*), relishing (*carvaṇa=sañhāra*), and return to the inexplicable (*anākhyā*), existing as their source (*prabhāva*). in: *Spandanirṇaya* commentary on the *Spandakārikā* verse 1.1, op.cit. in: Jaideva Singh, *Spandakārikās³ The Divine Creative Pulsation*, p. 5.
- 17 *Śiva-Sūtras* commentary on stanza 6, in: *Śiva-Sūtras. The Yoga of Supreme Identity*, trans. Jaideva Singh, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi 2000, pp. 33-34.
- 18 The extensive explanation of this process in connection with the yogic retraction and the cosmic cycles of the universal time is given in David Gordon White, *The Alchemical Body*, pp.232-233.
- 19 *Mahānayaprakāśa* of Śitikañśtha 8.3
- 20 *TĒ V* 27-37.
- 21 *TĒ I* 167.
- 22 *Devīpañcaśatikā* 2.71-2.80.
- 23 *Kulakaulinimata* 15.370cd.-374ab.
- 24 *TĒ* 32.3.
- 25 *Cidgaganacandrikā* 117.
- 26 *Vijñānabhairava* 78 - 82, quoted in the *MM*, stanza 37.
- 27 *Vijñānabhairava* 78.
- 28 *Mahānayaprakāśa* of Śitikañśtha 7.2.
- 29 *Cidgaganacandrikā* 121.
- 30 *Mahānayaprakāśa* of Arṇasimha 96-98.
- 31 *purastāka* (lit. the city of eight) is the subtle body (*sūkṣmaśarīra*) consisting of five sense-perceptions (*tanmātras*), mind (*manas*), intellect (*buddhi*), egoity (*ahankāra*)

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MS K: NA MS no. 1-767 (Śaivatantra) 412, NGMPP reel no. B157/19, no. of folios: 38, size in cms: 26 x 11, Script: Newārī. Final scribal colophon: (Nepal) samvat 854 caitrakṛṣṇa 12 siddha.

MS Kh: NA MS no.: 1-245 (Tantra) 411; NGMPP reel no. A 1177/7; No. of folios: 36; Size in cms: 22.6 x 5.6; Script (remarks): DN; Folios 1-21 24-26 30-41.

MS G: NA MS no.: 1-145 (Śaivatantra) 411; NGMPP reel no. B121/9; No. of folios: 36; Size in cms: 23 x 6; Script: Nevārī (Missing folios: 22 23 27 28 29). This manuscript has been photographed twice. So NGMPP reel no. B 121/9 is the same as NGMPP reel no. B 123/8. Final scribal colophon simply reads: samvat 1754.

MS Gh: NA MS no.: 1-199 (Śaivatantra) 410; NGMPP reel no. B123/5; No. of folios: 69; Size in cms: 22 1/2 x 7; script: Devanāgarī.

Kālikulapañcashatakā (*Devīpañcashatikā*) MS no. 5-358 (bauddhatantra), NGMPP: reel no. B 30/26. No. of folios: 88; size: 20.5x5cm; Material: palm-leaf; Script: Nevarī. Complete.

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